

# Duxbury Clipper

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## MacDonald the consummate professional

**P**rofessional. That's the one word that comes to mind over and over again when it comes to Town Manager Richard MacDonald.

Years ago, Duxbury residents made a choice to take the politics out of day-to-day town operations and install a strong town manager form of government. Some of the motivation

was practical, to be sure — selectmen just don't have the time to run the day-to-day aspects of town government anymore — but the overarching reason behind the move was to professionalize the town by putting a manager in the top seat, rather than an elected official from the community. Duxbury residents are smart, involved in their community and demanding — they expect a high quality of services for their tax dollars.



Duxbury has been lucky enough to have some good town managers since the change was made. But MacDonald has made the biggest strides in bringing Duxbury's operations into the modern age, and fulfilling the wishes of those voters who made the switch.

At the time MacDonald was appointed, some of his critics felt he was under-qualified, complaining that he was "just a plumber." (MacDonald was Duxbury's director of inspectional services before being appointed town manager.) Those critics have little to hang their hats on now.

The proof is in the pudding. The economic circumstances of the past couple of years have put the best local managers to the test. Yet Duxbury has consistently balanced its budget without resorting to layoffs or furloughs. There aren't many communities in Massachusetts that can say the same thing — especially not communities that rely as heavily on property taxes as Duxbury does. The no-nonsense approach MacDonald and his team have brought to the budget is also helping to improve other areas like personnel and public bidding. There's really no room for debate. Duxbury is an incredibly well-run town, and that starts at the top.

Yet, we're most impressed by his single-minded focus on what's best for the town. MacDonald has shown in recent years an ability to rise above politics and make tough decisions based on what's best for Duxbury. That's the very definition of professionalism, and it's exactly what Duxbury residents were looking for when they approved the town manager act.

MacDonald's three-year contract is up this year, and we hope that he sticks around a long time, and continues to move Duxbury in the right direction — towards a town that provides high-quality constituent services in a cost-effective manner. Not bad for a plumber.

— J. Graeber